

Vindiciæ Libertatis Evangelii:

O R,

A justification of our present Indulgence,
and the acceptance of Licences.

By way of R E P L Y

To a certain clamourous, anonymous Manuscript Pamphlet, entituled

Queries upon the DECLARATION
March 15th 167 $\frac{1}{2}$:

The most usual and considerable Arguments against
Licences are herein examined, and
satisfied.

By a Friend to Peace and Truth.

*How he is first in his own Cause, seemeth just: but his Neighbour cometh and
searcheth him out. PROV. 18. 17.*



Printed in the Year, 1672.

Windsor's Librarian's Catalogue

OF

A justification of our present indignities
and the acceptance of licences

By way of REPLY

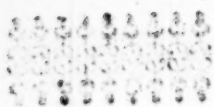
To a certain clamorous anonymous Manuscript
entitled

Quere upon the Doctor's Answer
March 18th 1741

The most liberal and candid Answer to
Licences and their examples, and
liberty

By a Friend to Peace and Truth

It is not in his own Camp, but in the Right of Liberty, and
Liberty to him and Prov. 28. 17.



Printed in the Year 1741

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*A Reply to certain anonymous Queries,
which reflect upon the Indulgence
declared March 15th 167 $\frac{1}{2}$; and the
Licences thereupon accepted.*

AMong the many invasions upon the Truths and Order of the Gospel, in our dayes, those which prove most injurious, have proceeded from Adversaries lurking in the bosom of the Churches. The wild Boars of the Forrest had not trod down our Fences, if the little Foxes within had not plucked off our Grapes; and by their Scandals opened a gape to let in Invaders to desolate the Vineyard. The Faith and Patience of the Saints hath withstood (through Grace) all visible Opposition: but Satan changing his appearance into an Angel of Light, hath accomplished those designs by the blind zeal of milltaken Friends, which in the display of his enmity were not feasible. When the Woman had escaped the Dragon's fury, she was in more danger of intanglement by the Beast's religious Policy. What Heavens *Rome* could not achieve, *Christian Rome* well nigh performed: And there are many Antichrists, all of which I dare not, cannot reduce to the visible Papal Interest. For though they all proceed from the inward principle of Self, and carry on the same joynt design of disturbing and deceiving Saints, with the breach and ruine of Churches; yet they are not more visibly Adversaries to the general concerns of God in the World, than declared Enemies (but from a grand mistake) to each other.

Our present Antagonist is very warm in his zeal against Antichrist, but planteth his battery at the liberty of our Worship. They whose prospect of things reacheth only the surface thereof, whose sight, by reason of darkness, terminates in the out-side of objects, without peircing into their bowels; will think the Querist hath made a fair Essay. He cries out *Antichrist, Babylon*, but smiteth the innocent Flock. And were his Weapon as keen as his Spirit, for any thing I know, he might let out much of the vital blood of the Churches.

The present Contest is *de lanâ caprinâ*. An enemy is imagined, and then buffeted. The case in hand is a meer civil priviledge, affording occasionally a little free air, a respite for Spiritual Liberty. But a prejudice against it once started, is no less firmly riveted in the the fancies of the weak, than points of greater moment ought to be in their judgments. Yet our Assailant (not content with his own practice) under the pain of Anathema, and imputation of Apostacy, with all other dreadful words, commands all of us to retire from, and not touch the unclean Licence, with no less peremptoriness then *Come out from among them, my people, and be ye separate* : to the scandal of Religion, and abundant contentment of observers. The truth is, the Querist's main quarrel is not a Licence, but something else of more moment, if I mistake him not. Tythings of Mint and Cummin should not break squares between us, were principles of the League agreed on. I may practise what I please *impune*, without any reflection thereon, so I hold the binding Points. Immorality then might be excused, duty otherwise is censured.

But my work, it will be said, lies in defending a Licence. I reply, it doth so : Only so unhappy is our Assailant, that our most innocent avoidance of his impression, will expose his nakedness. And possibly it may be necessary to set the brand in its due place, and evidence who it is *that troubles Israel*.

The manner of the Querist's discourse (if it will bear that stile) is fitly suited to the design of it. Questions are proper means to unsettle weak Souls. Nothing seems to be asserted ; yet every thing questioned. Probably because 'tis easier to query, than to prove. And we know who can ask more questions, than others can answer. It is all one with some Professours, (with whom only I suppose the Querist intended to deal) whether Truth and Righteousness can be disproved, or not, so they be questioned. And indeed, saving this poor low device, the expectant will fail of any thing worth his while, in all the Interrogatories. The Declaration is set upon the Rack, and there, tormented with impertinent Queries, to which it is made to cry guilty, and to confess what it never knew. It is not because the Query's need or deserve it, that a Reply is endeavoured ; but love and compassion to those who may be exposed to the snare, put me upon this trifling business. A serious, thoughtful Reply, would give some colour of solidity to the Queries. They shall therefore have *dignum nodo cuneum*, only a present discovery, yet abundantly sufficient for its work.

One great disadvantage the generality of unsettled Persons have, in such cases as this, is, That they are not able to look to the bottom of a plausible,

plausible discourse. Here the Headship of Christ is said to be disowned in our acceptance of Licences, and the Magistrate put in his place; but I am not sensible that every one is aware of the ground upon which the Querist bottometh this strained Notion. Nay, his intimations make me suspect that to acknowledge the Legitimacy of the Magistrates Power, or to pay Tribute, is no less derogation to Jesus Christ. I shall therefore consider the secret Principles upon which the Queries are built, or rather prevent them, in a few plain Propositions preliminary to what follows.

1. There is a Magistracy not allowed only, but set up by God, for the external government of the World. 'Tis not imaginable (granting the Personal Reign) that in the interim of the Lord's absence, he should not have his Substitutes. Either he governeth the World immediately, or leaves it in utter confusion and disorder; or he hath given Authority to men for this end. The first and second contradict sense and experience. And the third is no less obvious to them. The Querist will not (I hope) say that the Power which we see visibly in the hands of Men, is beside the intention of God. Or if he do, we know what to reply. In the interim let this Principle be taken for granted; there is cause of great security it may rest undisturbed.

2. Subjection to Magistrates is consequently a tribute due to them, and the refusal not only a rebellion against them, but the Supream Majesty. He who gave tribute to *Cæsar* as an example to us, and an instance of his accomplishment of all Righteousness: He who left it as a standing rule, established by his positive Command, That *we give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsars*; cannot but reflect upon disobedience herein, as an indignity against himself. Government is originally God's, invested as to its dispensation in the Person of Christ; and being by him in any part of it devolved upon men, is his image or stamp upon them. I ask therefore, have men Power and Government? *Whose image? whose superscription* is it? If God's, own it, submit to it; or you set yourselves against him. Christ hath placed them in their thrones, and by the Apostle's reasoning, this is a ground of subjection, *Rom. 13. 1.*

To say this or that Magistrate is Antichristian, will not serve the turn. I ask, Is their Power Antichristian in it self, or do they manage it for Antichrist? That Power which Christ gives, cannot be (as such) Antichristian, unless the Lord's Kingdom be divided against it self. And granting, that such manage their lawful Power in an unlawful Antichristian way: must we therefore deny their Power? or rather is it not our duty to forbear compliance with the abuse thereof? For were there any Powers in the Apostles dayes, or Christ's, which did not invade the

Gospel?

Gospel? yet our Lord Jesus Christ did not therefore deny them tribute; neither did the Apostles reject their Authority. The Pharisees indeed (whose disciple the Querist approveth himself) questioned their Allegiance, *Matth. 22. 17, &c.* yea, disowned it, *Joh. 8. 33.* But *Paul's* example of Subjection is very observable, *Acts 25. 10, 11.* Did he appeal unto *Cesar*, and not acknowledge his Power? A greater instance by far than our acceptance of a Licence. For, Sir, was not the Spirit of the Dragon, actor of the then Imperial Power, the very same Spirit and Authority afterwards invested in the Beast? *Rev. 12. 1, 2.*

3. Then I conclude, that there is a distinction between the due and undue exercise of Power. If Magistrates command lawful things, they must be obeyed. If unlawful things, we may refuse, nay we must withdraw our submission thereto; because a superiour Law of Jesus Christ supersedeth them.

And I add, that there is a vast difference between the unlawful commands of Magistrates. Do they inroach upon our civil Rights only? I know not that a private Christian, as such, may resist. Who made us Judges or Deviders in the World? Christ himself would not decide a controversy about Civil Right, *Luke 12. 14.* because he had put the administration thereof into other hands. And because he came to obey and not to rule, and to give us an example. But, that private Saints are to dispute civil Priviledges, or are in Conscience obliged to assert them, is incumbent on the Querist, if he judge meet to undertake the Province.

But then, as to the Laws of the Gospel, the Order, Institutions and Liberties thereof, the case varieth. The Church is the Pillar and Ground of Truth, to proclaim, assert, and preserve it, with the utmost hazzard; yet only in a Gospel-way.

4. Whereas the King is stiled *Supream in Ecclesiastical matters*, and said to have the same inherent in himself, it only respecteth his Power to suspend and dispense with Laws National and Canonical, enacted by Parliament, or concluded by the Overseers of the National Church of England, with respect to the outward regiment thereof.

That this is so, the very Declaration it self witnesseth, by suspending the penalties of such Laws only. Which not only his present Majesty hath herein practised, but his Predecessors also; whereof instances may be given upon demand. And we have little cause to quarrel with this Power of his to suspend such Laws, which hath (under God) been a means of deliverance to the Professors of these Nations more than once.

Object.

Objeſt. But this Supremacy is the propriety of Chriſt, who is Head of the Church, and to aſcribe it to the King, is to make him Head of the Church.

Anſw. This is a Plea ariſing from a groſs ignorance of the thing treated on. The Declaration ſpeaketh not of the King's Headſhip over the Church, but his Power about the Laws impoſed on the Churches of Chriſt. Cannot the King ſuſpend the penalty of an Act of Parliament, but he muſt be Head of the Church? Had he indeed abrogated or ſuſpended any Goſpel-Law, there might have been ſome colour for this idle Allegation. Or had he declared himſelf Head of the Church in oppoſition to Chriſt. It may be the word *Supremacy* gives the offence. But is it imaginable that an abſolute Supremacy is intended? Is it not rather ſuch a Supremacy as none on Earth hath right unto above, or equally to himſelf? For, is he not Supream in the Civil Government? yet who ever imagined that he doth not hold it of God? Who hath devolved it ſo upon the King, as to reſerve the original abſolute Sovereignty thereof, unto himſelf? Why then muſt this Eccleſiaſtical *Supremacy* intrench upon Chriſt's Prerogative more than that? If *Supremacy* in it ſelf, if ſome *Supremacy* may conſiſt with the Allegiance of the Magiſtrate unto the Divine Maieſty, it is incumbent upon the Queriſt to ſhew wherein this Eccleſiaſtical Supremacy intrencheth thereon; or to lay down the Plea thereof. But this, and the like notions will be, where ignorance and prejudice judge, or men interpret rather by fancy, than reaſon.

5. Our acceptance of Licences in purſuance of the Declaration, doth not infer our approbation of all expreſſions therein; much leſs rendreth us guilty of all, or any of thoſe wilde inferences charged upon us by the Queriſt.

I do not grant any thing extremely offensive in the Declaration; at leaſt if an allowance be given to the judgment of that Power which put it forth. However, I am pretty well aſſured that ſhould the Queriſt draw up a Declaration againſt Licences, or upon any other occaſion, ſober men would find as many ſtumbling blocks, if not more, therein. Let the Queries be a proof, wherein, beſides the Nonſenſe evident in every page, there is ſuch pitiful Policy and unſound Divinity, that certainly thoſe, if any ſuch be, who approve their deſign as to Licences, abhor the other Principles here and there ſcattered in them.

Beſides, it is an intollerable piece of uncharitableneſs and injuſtice for the Queriſt to ſet our accepting of Licences upon the Tenters, and force Conſequences thence, neither natural to the thing, nor approved of us, and charge us therewith. Let him own that ſpurious iſſue of his own brain:

brain : but why is it laid at our door, who abhor it indeed more than the Parent seems to do. Yet why do I blame him for abusing us with these consequences, who, if I mistake not the complexion of his Religion, abuseth his own Principles no less ; raising a superstructure of Doctrine and Policy upon that innocent fancy of Christ's Personal Reign, which all well-grounded Christians detest, and Christ himself much more.

I must tell the Querist, that his zeal in opposing Licences, makes him over-shoot the plain letter of the Declaration ; which while it gives leave to Preach without danger of the Law, supposeth us to be no friends to Episcopacy, and thereby freeth us from the guilt of all his irrational consequences fastened upon us in the Queries, as far as his strength and skill allow.

Be it added, That if our Licences on the one hand seem to countenance those Inferences (which by any just colour of reason they do not) our perseverance in Nonconformity denies them on the other hand. And really, Sir, to lay the weight of such severe Charges upon one single Act (and that in it self not what you represent it) and in the interim to deny all the testimony of our separation from that interest of Antichrist which you will have us favour ; favours of a Spirit into *whose counsel my Soul shall not enter*. Suppose the Act of accepting Licences did in it self intimate or conclude what you infer ; yet to charge these things upon our judgments while we publicly declare and practise contrary, is not fair play. But why do I suppose what is not arguable ? It may, Sir, be a conviction of your severe uncharitable Spirit ; otherwise 'tis utterly denied.

The truth is, Sir, you have got the faculty of inferring *Quidlibet ex quolibet*, any thing from what you please : which were it not a Sophism below a Christian, I would return upon you with such advantage, as might possibly expose your reasonings to better purpose, than a sober Reply, which they deserve not. But with such toys do you impose upon the credulity of tender Souls, and that in the Name of Christ, which renders the matter much more wicked.

6. The taking of a Licence doth not, cannot by any legitimate rational Inference, conclude that we accept our Ministry from the King, or that he thereby makes us Ministers. To make a Minister, gives authority to Preach, and not Liberty only. I accept the King's Favour in permitting the exercise of my Office in his Dominions peaceably, to which Office I am authorized by Jesus Christ. But neither doth he declare that I am made an Officer hereby, nor do I acknowledge it. The Declaration supposeth us in our Work, calleth us *Teachers* of our respective Congregations, antecedently to a Licence. And the words of the
Licence

Licence are exprels to this purpose, *We do hereby permit and license A. B. of the Congregational, or Presbyterian persuasion to be a Teacher.* Is Permission Authorization? Is leave to Preach in this or that respective place, Ordination to be a Preacher or Pastor? Indeed our Licence respects the Laws which forbid our Preaching, not our Office. It defendeth us from their violence, that they shall not impede our work; but doth not at all call us to it. I add, that if this Licence make us Ministers, those Laws made us none. If that give Office; those supposed us not in Office; which they no where exprels, if my memory fail not, I am sure we never yielded. If an Enemy set upon me to take away my life, and a Friend interpose his Shield to bear off the blow; no man in his wits will say that Friend is my Father, he begat me, brought me into the world. No! he preserves the life I had before, and accomplisheth, that I may enjoy it maugre the Adversary. The case in hand is not substantially different. The Licence gives me liberty to exercise my Ministry without being lyable to former hazzards: but I derive not my Office thence.

7. I conclude, to accept a Licence is lawful. My Spirit is not so cross, nor am I so very angry at the Restraint heretofore, (though I suppose there be who have suffered as much, as the Querist, for the Cause of the Gospel) as therefore to dethrone the Power that prosecuted me, or refuse any legitimate incouragement from it. The cry of *Beast, Antichristian*, &c. is, *Vox est prater ea nihil*, an empty noise, and nothing in it: an inarticulate sound, and lury of words, (as to the merit of the Cause in hand) void of solid Reason. Did *Paul* refuse to be freed from Prison, because unjustly bound? Or did those Magistrates lose their Power in freeing, because they had abused it in binding the Apostles? Did *Peter* and *John*, being whipt for Preaching, resolve to be whipt to death, rather than accept freedom from the hands of their Oppressors? The Gospel is a stranger to such reasonings. The Spirit thereof is meek and gentle, not furious and froward.

But I shall subjoyn a few Arguments to confirm the lawfulness of accepting Licences, and am in concern'd, though the Querist put Interrogatories to them, they are of age, and can answer for themselves.

1. If it were unlawful to submit to the Command of those Laws which forbid us to Preach, then 'tis lawful to accept an exemption from them in a Licence.

The branches of the Proposition are directly opposite, and therefore lawfulness or unlawfulness cannot be predicated of both. There is but one Cavil that I foresee can be objected to this Argument, which I shall obviate in the next, *viz.*

2. If the matter of a Licence be good, and there occur no intangling conditions in its acceptance: then 'tis lawful to receive it. But the matter of the Licence is lawful, &c.

Preaching is good, and a duty: *Wo to us if we Preach not the Gospel.* To have freedom to Preach is also good, and desirable; 'tis enjoy'd as the matter of your Prayer, *That the Gospel may have free Course, &c. viz.* That all men may permit its free publick promulgation in the World, and that it may be prevalent and successful every where. Now how can the Gospel have free Course unless those who forbid its Preaching before, now permit it: which whether it be by a Publick Declaration of its permission, or by the solemn permission of every individual as in our case, or by a tacite connivance at all, it matters not: We do, we ought to pray for the thing, let Providence determine the manner as it pleaseth. And then there are no intangling terms imposed upon the Licensed. Let the Querist assign such conditions (for we know of none) and they shall be considered. Do we not choose our own Place to Meet in? Do we not keep our own Principles? Is not our Separation Assested and Practised still? We pay no Money for our Licences, make no Recantation when we receive them. But what will satisfy an unquiet man, who is resolved to be froward?

3. 'Tis lawful to take Sanctuary in a Magistrate (under God) when he offereth it, or we may rationally expect it from him. Magistrates do not only *bear the Sword*, but are called *Shields*. And why? If we may not shrowd our selves under them, and accept, and make use of their Protection. And let the Querist demonstrate clearly, if he be able, that our accepting Licences for our Defence from the severity of Laws, is an illegitimate hiding under the *Shield*. 'Tis manifest, That he to whom the *Shields of the Earth belong*, hath disposed the Heart of the King to cover us with his Power. And we believe, that to refuse the Shelter, is a disowning the Goodness, Wisdom, and Faithfulness of God, ingaging it for us.

4. Either it is lawful to take a Licence, or a Licence rendreth a lawful thing unlawful. Had his Majesty Connived at our Liberty, or Declared to permit us without the mention of a Licence, we might, we ought to accept the Favour thankfully: And doth a Licence change the nature of the thing? In what part of the Licence doth this faculty of Transmutation lie? It may be you will say, 'tis in our Acceptance, not in the Licence. But I Reply, Why in the formality of accepting a Paper-Licence, more than in a secret Approbation of the same Liberty given without it? If his Majesty had permitted our Liberty without Declaring so much; it had been certainly lawful to accept the same tacitely

facitely as he gave it, yea, and to approve and own his Favour therein. And why our Expression of such Approbation by the external Act of taking a Licence becomes unlawful, belongs to the Querist to unriddle.

Again, How can the accepting a Licence for such a Place, render our Preaching in that Place unlawful, or others Hearing there? Doth a Licence Null that great Statute-Law of Christ, That *we lift up holy hands in Prayer every where*, 1 Tim. 2. 8. That we worship God indifferently in all Places! Doth a Licence pollute the Place? or is a Place capable of such defilement, in the dayes of the Gospel? I am ashamed of the Superstition of the Querist in this case! Sir, 'tis lawful to Preach the Gospel in a Consecrated Place, why not in a Licenc'd? And 'tis no less Superstition for such trifling Reasons to exclude the Worship of God out of any (otherwise convenient Place) than to confine or limit it to, I know not what, holy Places, as others do. Nay, moreover, my Preaching with a Licence becomes also unlawful if the Queries can prove it. Strange conjuration certainly, in that small script of Paper to disoblige us from so great a Duty! But why do I dwell upon the Confutation of such a trifle? Permission by whomsoever (nay, were it the Pope himself who should vouchsafe it, which I am sure he never will) cannot change the nature of our Duty. And I must say again: We cannot own that contrariety of Spirit, that greatness of Stomach which will only serve God when and where it is forbidden, and maugre an Allowance of Freedom, practise our Worship in opposition.

Lastly, It was lawful for the *Jews* with thankfulness, to make use of the Proclamation of *Cyrus*, to Return and build the Temple and set up the Worship of God, *Ezra* 1. 1, &c. And when *Artaxerxes* had by a contrary Decree obstructed the Work, *chap.* 4. 17. They quarrell'd not with *Darius* for re-inforcing the first Decree, and making a Counter Edict to the Second, *chap.* 6. 1, &c. What is there in the King's Declaration more than in those Decrees? or in our Licences, than in their Acceptance of and closure with them? I confess the *Jews* being once at work, continued therein; or reassumed it after some Cessation, even while they lay under *Artaxerxes* his discouragement. And so did we, as we might, build the Temple of Jesus Christ in the day of our Restraint, which the Declaration acknowledgeth. But we will build, as the *Jews* did, when we have Permission also; till the Querist produce more convincing Arguments against our practice, than we have yet seen or heard.

I proceed now to consider the *Queries* as far as material to our business, though I must profess there's little or nothing in them of weight, or real concernment as to the case in hand.

Query 1. First 'tis Queried, *Whether the Liberty given to the Papists, being absolute and free, and ours Conditional and Restrictive, be not a ground to conceive the Indulgence of Protestant Recusants only a cover, the better to countenance what is more really granted them.*

Reply. Well! Suppose this Query; grant the whole of it: yet doth it not prove our accepting Licences unlawful. What if an unlawful Intention be cloak'd under a lawful Pretence? May we not therefore make use of that Pretence for a better end?

Further, I Reply; We are not concerned what the secret Design may be, so long as the thing is good. If our Refusal of a Licence might prevent the Indulgence of Papists, there were more in the Query than I can see. But that we ought to refuse our Liberty, because they have theirs, when our refusal of Licences will not prejudice their Freedom; let the Querist prove at his leisure.

Besides, I understand not the phrase that Liberty is *more really* granted to them than us. Have not we Publick and they only Private Allowance? Do not we really enjoy the benefit of the Declaration? And shall we scruple whether or no it be really given? Is not that really given which I am really possessed of, as a free gift? If by *really* you mean *cordially, sincerely*, you over-shoot your self. Do you know the heart of the King? Are you not to judge thereof by his Expressions (till the contrary appear) which are more favourable unto us, than them? Why do you insinuate Jealousies? In fine, we are thankful for the honour put upon us to be Publick in our Meetings. And we esteem it our advantage, having thereby opportunity of making our Innocence in Principle and Worship known to all Observers. The want whereof was formerly our disadvantage, and an hindrance to the Gospel.

Your superadded Considerations I wave for their evil favour, and want of sobriety.

Only to the Third I must say that you speak without Book. What passage in the Declaration inviteth the Jesuites and Seminary Priests? And what if they come into *England* now? Did they not so do before the Declaration? If both then, and now, they assume a Freedom not publicly granted them, Charity would judge them more bold than welcom.

And as to the Query it self, I must deny the Indulgence of Papists to be more absolute than ours. Show the Conditions by which we are restrained, more than they. Will you say a Licence is a Condition? If it be, 'tis so just and lawful, that we judge it our security and advantage above them. Hard terms indeed! to have our Liberty warranted under

under his Majesties Hand and Seal, to produce in our Defence upon all occasions.

Query 2. He inquireth again, *Whether the Indulgence to the Non-conformists, is not tendered upon such Conditions, as may involve the Accusers thereof in the guilt of much sin?*

Reply. A grand Question, and well stated! Whether we *may* contract guilt hereby? not whether we do become guilty? There is it seems a possibility of managing a Licence unto Sin. But is there not also a possibility of avoiding that guilt? The Inquirers Conscience likely began to reluct. He cannot say we do sin herein, but *may*. A goodly pretence to make Proselytes by! A fair Plea to attempt the scattering of Christians, and breach of Churches. There *may be sin in a Licence, or it may follow thereon: therefore withdraw from the Licensed, therefore be ye separate.* But what if I retort, There may be no sin consequential, there is no sin in taking a Licence: therefore if any poor Soul be persuaded by the Querist, it is seduced, it is deceived, and the Querist must give an account of the Imposture to him who judgeth righteously. What, Sir, dare you attempt so high, upon the sandy foundation of a May-be?

Well! that a *may-be* of Sin is in the Licences, the Querist undertakes to prove. To which end he sifteth the Declaration, and concludeth, that by all means we must consent to all Expressions therein. Goodly work! I had thought our Consent to so much of the Declaration as concerneth us, might serve our turn. But the Querist's Logick inferreth our approbation of all. It seems every person who hath Money out upon Bond, or a Farm, or House let to Lease, or is any way concern'd in Contracts or Affairs of Right, or otherwise; must consent to every Phrase and Expression in the Instruments of Law belonging thereto. Or, to come more close: Every man, if any such there be, who alloweth not a Licence, or approveth some Reasonings of the Queries to that end; must approve all the Nonsense therein, and conclude every Consideration thereof, solid Argument, and all the hard Censures thereof, good and wholesome. Hold Sir! reflect I pray upon this bold Hypothesis seriously, and I dare promise, you will change your Judgment, or hazzard an Opinion that you have none at all.

Well! lest the *may* in the Query should not be significant enough, the next Paragraph addeth, That *our Address for Approbation of Preachers, and Allowance of Places* [May Necessarily] *involve into an Assent to all Expressions in the Declaration.* What *may* and *necessarily* too? A Contradiction in the terms. *Possibly necessarily* we must Assent to all in the Declaration. If you will spare the *may*, I deny the Assertion. It is down-right false. Make the Proposition universal, and the error will

will appear. *He who accepteth of an Advantage or Priviledge by a Law or Declaration, Bond, Lease, or other Instrument; must approve all particular matters and expressions contained therein. The Accepters of Licences approve the advantage of the Liberty offered in the Declaration. Ergo, They approve all matters and expressions therein contained.*

Sir, Prove the Major Proposition, and you shall be an Oracle.

What follows, is a Repetition of sundry Phrases and Sentences in the Declaration, and therewith the Queriſt doughtily concludes we yield them all.

But why ſo? Is not our Profeſſion and Practice contrary to many of them? Doth not the Declaration ſuppoſe us to continue Nonconformiſts ſtill? Why do you aſſert without proof? Let us attend briefly unto particulars.

Inference 1. Firſt he tells us, *The King's Supremacy in matters Eccleſiaſtical is aſſerted in the Declaration, and we by accepting a Licence, own it.*

Reply. I muſt ſay the King's Supremacy in matters Eccleſiaſtical, as ſtated in the fourth *Poſtulatum*, is no ſuch ugly Bugbear as you make it. They who ſoberly peruſe the Oath of Supremacy, and its Explanation by *Queen Elizabeth's* Council, and Learned Men, on that occaſion, will be of this Perſwaſion. Well, admit the King hath a Supremacy; yet that my Acceptation of a Licence inferreth it, I deny. For my Conſcience in Religion is exerciſed about my Duty, and whoſeever gives me the opportunity to diſcharge it, be it a Turk or a Forreign Conqueror, I will (through Grace) do my Duty, though I own not their Authority.

You tell us in the next broken Sentence, *The Parliaments have given the King a Supremacy in theſe things.* Then by the Law of the Nation it is His, and may be owned, wherein it doth not intrench upon the Lord Chriſt's Supremacy; as in our caſe it doth not.

Inference 2. *By taking our Licences, we confeſs that the King hath a Legal Right, to ſuſpend old Laws and make new.*

Reply. Sir, There is no foundation for this Conclusion in the Declaration; nor can I find any colour for it there. However I deny the Conſequence. That his Majeſty may ſuſpend the penalty of Eccleſiaſtical Laws, the Parliaments have Recogniz'd: but that he may make new Laws, I read not. He may alſo (*Quoad hic & nunc*, in particular caſes) ſuſpend the penalty of other Statute Laws; but that he may therefore make new Laws is a Notion, Sir, wherewith your ſelf hath firſt bleſſ'd the World. To null Old Laws and make New, belongs to the ſame Power, and an Inference from the one to the other, is natural.

tural. But to conclude, from a Power to suspend the penalty of some Laws, to a Power to make other Laws, is an effect of the strength of your fancy, and not any commendation of your Reason. Several of his Majesties Predecessours have suspended Laws occasionally, but none of them thereupon made any.

Infer. 3. To accept a Licence makes the King Head in Ecclesiastical matters. For we come to him for Approbation of Ministers and Allowance of Places, which are both Ecclesiastical matters, and proper only for the Church to order.

Reply. How we acknowledge the King's Supremacy, hath been above declared, as, how it is intended in all the Instruments wherein that stile is used. His Headship is much the same, unless he be made Head of the National Church of *England*; to which we readily yield the Prerogative to assign its own Head: the Scriptures having determined ours (*But he approveth Ministers and alloweth Places, which the Church only ought to order.*)

What? Is the Church only to Appoint Meeting Places? By what Text? Where is the Scripture-Rule? I had thought we might lift up clean hands to God in every Place, who ever Allow or Appoint it. And as for Ministers, his Majesty undertaketh not to approve who are fit, and who not, in respect of their Gifts and Abilities for their Work: But Approveth all that come as to their Indemnity from the Laws. Which though the Declaration call *Approving*, yet the Licence interpreteth by *Permitting*, viz. That he shall not be Prosecuted by the Acts otherwise in force against him.

Infer. 4. We consent that all disapproved Meetings are Seditious Conventicles.

Reply. I am weary of considering such incoherent deductions. Is our Licence a Subscription to this Point? Have we by accepting it, set our Hands to the particulars of the Declaration? Pray, Sir, speak intelligibly! make the matter plain, demonstrate the dependence of the Conclusion upon the Premises; Evidence the Contexture of receiving a Licence, with our consent that your Meeting is Seditious: that I may have a little to say for my self, when I shall become your Convert. In the interim, Sir, if your Behaviour and Principles vindicate you from this Charge, I shall not Censure you, nor I suppose any that are Licensed.

Infer. 5. Again, The Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England, is in the Declaration stiled the Basis, Rule, and Standard of the general Publick Worship of God in the Nation; this, by taking a Licence, we yield to be good Doctrine.

Reply.

Reply. But pray, Sir, seeing his Majesty hath resolved that no other Doctrine or Government shall be used in Parochial Churches, than those of the Church of *England*, why may we not believe that they shall be the *Basis, Rule, and Standard* of the *Worship and Manner* there observed? Yet, that it ought to be so, or that my Licence inferreth my consent thereto, is yet to be proved. It seems, whether we will or no, we must hold this resolution of his Majesty for good Doctrine. Though I profess, for my own part, I judge it not matter of Doctrine, but of Fact. That general Publick Worship shall be *de facto* regulated by Episcopal Canons, the King declareth; but that we, who take Licences, shall approve this to be good Doctrine, or that it is Doctrine at all, is not declared.

Infer. 6. By taking a Licence, *We approve the Toleration of an Interest, which by Principle and Practice declareth they ought not to keep Faith with Hereticks; and by vertue of a Subservency to a Foreign Power, are to stand disposed to kill and murder their Rulers, and massacre their Neighbours, burn Cities and Countries, whereof France, Piedmont, Poland, Ireland, and London, can give ample and undeniable testimony: Witnessing that they are Beasts and Brutes rather than Men, and to tolerate their Religion, is to tolerate Sedition, and to introduce all Confusion and Desolation.*

Reply. Bona Verba! *Taking a Licence is approving Papists, &c. Si accusasse satis quis innocens?* All this I must believe upon the Querist's bare word, for proof of my consent hereto there is none. The very Declaration, though it tolerate the Papists, doth not own these horrid things, yet my Licence infers my consent thereto. *If I accept a Licence, I consent to the Toleration of Papists, and all their Abominations.* The Consequence is denied, and I expect its Demonstration. I heartily wish that no Doctrines but those of Papists did introduce Confusion, Anarchy and Blood. All that I know of the Licensed, abhor these things and Doctrines; and I am confident all of them do so whom I know not. If the Querist do detest them, he is the fitter to cast this stone, but not at us.

Infer. 7. Taking a Licence, countenanceth the Invitation of all Foreigners without distinction, in violation of all the known wholesom Laws to the contrary.

Reply. It hath been long the complaint of wise men, That the Non-incouragement of Forreigners, is one of the greatest lets to the flourishing of Trade among us. Our Land is more fertile, than that the Natives can devour its Fruits; whereas if Strangers assisted more considerably, the Countrey would find the advantage. Besides, they bring with them their

their Trade and Interest ; which the Low-Countries considering, have improved to the enriching of themselves beyond what any of their Neighbours (neglecting that Expedient) ever attained.

What wholesome Laws have been Enacted to prevent the Settlement of Strangers among us, I have not search'd, nor am concern'd : my business lying else-where. Neither know I how wholesome they are : I question not their Seasonableness when Enacted. But, Sir, Laws are changeable, as their occasions vary. And it hath been the Wisdom of Governours to let them fall by disfluency, as they saw convenient. And possibly, his Majesty is apprehensive of the disadvantage of a rigorous enforcement of the Laws pointed at ; which might occasion that Expression in the Declaration.

If you harp upon the same string, as in the third enforcement of the former Query : my Answer is ; That unless I had better reason to believe that Jesuites and Seminary Priests are invited over, than you think fit to give, I may, at least, suspend my thoughts about it. However it is again denied, that taking a Licence, argues my consent to this encouragement of Forreigners ; take it in what sense you please.

Infer. 8. By taking a Licence we declare a freedom to give up all Non-conforming Brethren, who cannot go with us for Licences, as Seditious, to all imaginable severity threatened against them.

Reply. This is like the rest, an injurious Imputation. It seems you expect that the Body of Professours in the Nation, should refuse to accept this Indulgence, lest they expose a nameless Querist ; who is not at all concerned that they hereby much more expose themselves. What think you, Sir, of those who judge themselves bound in Conscience to take Licences ? Must they lay down their Duty, to please the Querist ? Besides, Prisons and Banishment, and Confiscation, and Death, &c. attend us if the Laws be not suspended, and a Licence not accepted : and all this we must be content to undergo for the Querist's sake ; whose sweet, tender, charitable, obliging Spirit breathing out against us the imputation of Apostates, Persecutors, &c. no question layes an engagement upon us, to forgo our Liberty, and all to gratifie him. And, what if his Stomach were as weak as his Judgment ? Must we not eat, because he hath no appetite ? Must we forbear, lest we expose his nice fancy to a Nausea ? Yea, Sir, must the Souls of the Nation be starved, and by the severity of the Laws deprived of Spiritual Food, because your Opinion excepteth against the Dressing ? And by all means thousands of Ministers, and many ten thousands of People, are to fall under the scourge, to please your scrupulosity.

Well, but neither will our forbearance of a Licence bestead the
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Dissenter, nor doth our acceptance thereof expose him. And why may not I as well argue, That our universal grateful acknowledgment of his Majesties Favour herein, is, and will be judged a ballance to the weakness of the Refuser? For, what proportion is there between the number of the one and other? My real judgment is, according to the best information that I have had, That the whole Collection of those who forbear Licences, amounteth not in the whole Nation, to an equality with some single separate Congregations. Let the sober judge whether it can be rationally expected that such multitudes should part with their Liberty (if it were matter of Liberty only) that one or two scattered here and there be not displeased. But indeed, the Querist is alone in this Censure, others are content to bear with us, as we do with them.

And we are willing to exercise all love, mercy, and forbearance toward the Querist also: We abhor the thought of imputing Sedition to him, nor doth our closure with the Declaration infer it, muchless dare we expose him to the Laws, for a refusal of a Licence. We hope we *have otherwise learnt Christ*. Only I wonder at this complaint of his, seeing the Indulgence is equally enjoyed by all; so far is the Querist from being exposed. In the interim, 'tis we are exposed, our Churches, our People, not only by their Scandals laid on us by the Queries, but otherwise, which I care not to mention. In all this, the Querist is innocent, and we guilty: Why? because he had the advantage of complaining first. The Aggressor generally prepossesseth the minds of Men with his story, right or wrong, whereby they are fortified against any impression from the Defendant's Plea.

At length there is a transient flash, or shew of proof, that our Licences draw all these Consequences upon us: For (saith the Querist) *how fully do the Scriptures, as well as known Experience, evidence this truth: That the guilt of other mens sin, is contracted as well by silence and connivance, inference and consequence, as actual contrivance and active transacting it our selves.*

How fully the Scripture gives countenance to the Querist's design, or warrant to his Opinion concerning us, will be seasonable to weigh, when such Scriptures are produced, as we are here threatned with. And I have a little confidence, that their unreadiness will much procrastinate a Second Edition of the Queries.

In the interim, I dare Affirm, That we contract none of the aforesaid guilt by any of the wayes mentioned; There are deductions which flow freely and naturally from Premises; and there are Inferences also which by the force of illogical reasoning, heightened by a fiery zeal in our
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warm Sophister, are unkindly drawn from our innocent practice. But, Sir, let the Extract cool a little, till the *igneous* Attoms insinuated into it evaporate: and our Uprightness will be thereby more visibly evident. In a word, I am not afraid of any Inference legitimately drawn from a Licence accepted: the afore-mentioned appear to have no dependence thereon.

But, *We are commanded positively to keep far from an evil matter, and as abhorring the evil thing, and condemning the vile Person, to separate; come out from, and not touch the one as well as the other; to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but reprove them rather; there being no medium, it seems, between reproof and fellowship.*

A miserable Partition of the Question! You have not yet so much as undertaken to prove a Licence in it self evil (but only the pretended Consequences of it) yet here it is supposed, and we commanded (upon pain of the Querist's censure) *to keep far from the evil matter, &c.* Sir, when you prove the Licence sinful, wee'l attend to your counsel; till then we are not so charitable as to grant what you so heartily beg, and prove so weakly.

There may be a Mystery in the *Vile Person* from whom we are to separate, whom having no acquaintance with, I desire the Querist to demonstrate to me, that I may avoid him.

Again, *We bless and bow the knee for, go in and reap the benefit of the Declaration so evil, without any witness against the same.* A Sentence well worded! What? have we blessed and worshipped an Idol? I am loth to expels what I apprehend of the boldness of this charge. The testimony expected will be deferred till you prove the evil insinuated.

At last, the accepting of Licences is accused of positive guilt, as well as consequential; and it is worth our while to observe where the charge is grounded, viz. *The address to such an interest for favour of this sort, upon the terms tendered, cannot but contrast sin against Christ, and our Generation, in contradicting the work and witness of the day. For bath not the late Controversie, and Contest managed in these Nations, lay'n between Christ and Antichrist: witnessed by former Declarations, Protestations, Prints, &c.*

I hope the Querist intendeth not the late War by the *Controversie*. If he do, I must tell him, it was not between Christ and Antichrist, but about Civil Differences. And it is very unseasonable to rake among the cold ashes thereof, in which there cannot be found (that I know of) a living spark. Only how the coherence lies between that Wir, and acceptance of the Indulgence, I have not eyes enough to discern. Pray, Sir, bring them a little nearer together in your next, and tie them fast;

or they will not endure each other, till you can call a witness.

But possibly, this is only my conjecture. You intend our Controversie with Conformity. Here you say Christ and Antichrist were in the lists, and for any thing I know they are so still. For, are the Combatants agreed? Doth a Licence reconcile them? Nothing less! It hath indeed procured a Cessation of Arms. We are not now over-run by our Assailants, as formerly. But the cause continues as it was. Our contention was by Faith and Patience, wherein the Accepters of Licences, with as much constancy (and possibly far more sobriety) as the Querist (if I may judge by the Spirit of his Paper) have acquitted themselves. That the Lord hath made his Majesty the Instrument to accomplish an intermission of Hostility against us (who had no offensive Weapons or Principles, only were guarded by Innocence, under the Protection of Providence) we acknowledge and accept with all gratefulness. Nor is our Address to this *Interest* a laying down our Testimony; I have proved afore, that Magistracy, as such, is not Antichristian, but an Ordinance of God's.

I add moreover, That the present Indulgence is such a signal countenance to Religion, and so suitable (in the main) to the Spirit of the Gospel, that I cannot but esteem it self a grand Testimony against Antichristianism: if Persecution, and Oppression, for Conscience sake, be Antichristian.

As for the *Testimony of the day* in Nonconformity, how do we contradict it? Is our accepting the Permission of a free Exercise of Nonconformity the contradiction thereof? Yea forsooth, We are not Nonconformists, because we are content to be Indulged in Nonconformity. Only there is something further offensive in it, which the nimble invention of the Querist blesteth us in the display of; that otherwise had never enter'd into our heads, I am sure never shall into our hearts. *We own the Interest that gives this Favour.* Yea, Sir, we do, though in your fancy it be a contradiction of our dayes witness. I am heartily glad your mind is known, that I may put in my Negative against it.

Now, Sir, having received the favour of your rare Notion concerning the witness of the day, I cannot in civility and gratitude deny the imparting of mine, because you are a friend, and may improve it. I think the testimony of a particular day doth not alwayes consist in our distance from one individual point, but that it fixeth in a middle between two extreames. The Sun maintaineth its course in the Ecliptick, neither inclining to the North or South of the Zodiack, but steering exactly between them. So doth Truth equally averfate each extremity. If Conformity lye as *Scilla* on the one hand, I am sure there is a severe

unscriptural Nonconformity on the other. We are not willing to split our Consciences on that, or be Ingulf'd in this ; and therefore in a tremulous motion, fearing both, avoid them indifferently, without allaying our testimony. If, Sir, you be concern'd in this state of the Question, I cannot help it. Yet for a sweetning, I add, That what good thing we find in those who take either of those wayes, we can heartily approve it ; *walking by the same Rule according to what we have attained.* I omit the consideration of the last Paragraph under this Second Query : not only because nothing new, or unanswered, occur'd therein ; but for another reason well known to the Querist.

Query 3. *Whether or no there is not good cause to judge that the tender'd Indulgence comprehendeth some real insinuating designment against the Lords People.*

Reply. To give countenance to the affirmation of this Question, five Arguments are urged. Two of them full of insinuations of mistrust, and excitation of a Spirit of jealousy. All, so inconclusive and improper as to the design of the Queries, that I wonder how the Querist stumbled upon them, lying so far out of his way.

In general, therefore let me ask the Querist, Did not your own fancy dress up this Bugbear scruple ? Were you not troubled at our quiet enjoyment of Liberty in a way which you approve not ? And was not this fancy sent among us to fear us ? It seems if you cannot hinder our Peace utterly, you'd disturb it, and us in its enjoyment. But why do you affright us with dreams of this nature ?

Neither do I think your Reasons perswasive. Indeed, Sir, they are Weapons to be weilded with either hand, right or left. Capable of perswading *pro* or *con*, which the Disputant pleaseth.

There's War with the Dutch, Ergo, a design against Nonconformists.

The Declaration confesseth a frustration of all Attempts against Nonconformists by Coercion : Ergo, Indulgence must destroy them.

Means are used to oblige the heads of three sorts of Nonconformists, Ergo &c.

Lastly, The Nation continues as wicked as ever, or rather is worse, Ergo &c.

Truly, we may infer from each of these Premises, the contrary to the Querist's Conclusion with as much probability, as his. But these are good Arguments where the Querist's Trade lies.

Well ! Suppose there be a design ; can this disprove the lawfulness of a Licence ? May not a design be countenanc'd as well by lawful things as unlawful ? Or suppose we forbear a Licence ; will this prevent the design ? Or doth our acceptance countenance the Plot ? Nothing less ! Sir, your want of a Licence will not defend you in such a case. Nor will my Licence expose me. May I not be as wary with a Licence, as with-

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out it? Is it not as possible to secure my self from violence now, as formerly? Pray, Sir, whither tend your reasonings? where shall we find their scope?

Query 4. *Whether the pretended Indulgence is not a straitning rather than enlargement of Christian Liberty, &c?*

Reply. I believe not! My reason is founded upon the manner of the Coercion before; which compared with any restraint likely to follow upon the Indulgence, is very considerable. If it may please God, I desire any illegal course may be taken to hinder my Liberty, rather than what bears the form and stile of a Law. For, though in the concerns of Conscience, Laws are not Laws indeed: yet my Case is clearer, and my Way plainer, if I be Persecuted without, and against Law, than by, or with it.

'Tis granted moreover, That Christ hath purchased a Freedom for us to *Worship him in Spirit and in Truth*. Yea, he hath asserted, and providentially maintained it for the body of Nonconformists in these Nations, notwithstanding contrary indeavours. But how this Freedom is allayed by a Licence, by a Permission to enjoy it: because my own judgment informs me not, I shall attend our Querist's account, viz.

1. *Herely we must by our own consent, be put under the Cognizance and inspection of our enemies.*

Who are our enemies here intended, I am not careful to inquire. But certainly our Worship of God is such, so holy, so innocent, that I esteem it its commendation to be known even by its Adversaries. Sir, it is not our Worship and Principles, but our unsuitable Conversation, our personal failings, that create offences. And I doubt not, if our Observers knew the way of Nonconformity better, their anger would be much allay'd, and we should have fairer quarter with them. Nay, possibly we should sooner gain them thereby, than they get advantage against us.

The Gospel was never intended for privacy. Christ Preach'd to his Disciples in the Ear, and in Secret occasionally; but left it in charge with them, to preach it as they might upon the house tops, that is, publickly and openly, *Veritas non querit angulos*. Truth abhorreth Privacy, so doth that Gospel of Truth which we preach. And I must profess we have no Points to inculcate upon our Hearers, which I dare not (if I may Preach any thing publickly) proclaim in the greatest and most mixed Audience. Let them who are afraid to have their Doctrine and Worship brought to the touchstone, and who Preach things of other concern than Salvation, or lyable to Civil or just Ecclesiastical Censure: Let them retire into the secret Chambers, and say *Christ is there*, but it must not be known. Let them, I say, who lead aside the simple, creep into houses when

when they may be publick: I desire my enemies (if I have any) may know my Doctrine & Manner. *Wisdom is justified of her Children.* To be known therefore is our desire, and priviledge no straitning. Let the works of darkness be done in darkness. *They that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that are drunk, are drunk in the night.* We never retired for fear of the discovery of our Practice or Principle. If the Querist's Way and Doctrine may not indure inspection, I judge the course he takes more wise than innocent. Yet I wonder that fear of inspection should have any influence upon his undaunted Spirit; who prosecuteth us so severely for only a groundless suspicion of timorousness.

2. But as the King's Meeters and Preachers, you must be lyable to his Appointments; especially in the observation of his Publick-dayes and times, under penalty of forfeiting your Liberty.

Why is your eye evil without cause? What clause in the Declaration gives countenance to such an Inference? Is there a word, a title therein to this purpose? Yea, there is not the least occasion given either of this or the two following Inferences. In the former Query you endeavoured to stir up Jealousie in the Subject; and in this you seem to put Weapons into the hand of the King; both will thank you for it when they see reason.

We can without Order or a Command, nay we do press the Lord with the concernments of our Nation. We have a Rule to *Pray for the Peace of the City, the Kingdom wherein we are, that in the peace thereof we may have Peace.* We can also bless God for National Mercies upon the same ground. We can lay the state of the Kingdom (as far as we understand it, yea indeed absolutely) at the feet of God. But that our Licence formally bindeth us hereto, is denyed. Yea, He who therein gives us Liberty about things in his judgment of no less concern, we believe leaves us to our freedom in this also; supposing it a Point of Nonconformity.

3. You add, *Hereby by our own agreement an insnaring temptation as one of the conditions; you are to be lyable to the King's Censures continually if you do any thing derogatory to the Doctrine, Discipline, or Government of the establish'd Church, which must needs expose you continually.*

Reply. When will you make your Inferences clear? How doth this appear to be our Agreement? Where, and when did we sign it? Or, doth the Declaration expresse or intimate our Consent to these things? The King indeed declareth, *That if after this his Clemency and Indulgence, any of his Subjects shall presume to abuse the Liberty, and so II Preach Seditiously, or to the derogation of the Doctrine or Government of the establish'd Church, &c. He doth hereby give them warning, and de-*
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clare, That he will proceed against them with all imaginable severity, &c. This is indeed a Declaration of his Intention and Resolve in such cases, but implies not the Offenders consent.

But suppose our Licence did imply a Consent to that threatening, it is no straitning of our Liberty comparatively.

Before, we were proceeded against whether we preached Sedition or not, whether we derogated from the Church of *England* or not; now only if we do: we have then by the Declaration gotten so much ground, which we had not before.

The truth is, we think our selves much secured by this Clause; for it supposeth our Nonconformity to have no natural tendency to Sedition, or the defamation of others. For which Candour we humbly thank his Majesty, professing we are strangers to Sedition, and abhor it; yea, that we ever were, and shall be still tender of those that differ from us. Hoping, yea, believing, That to assert our own Principles, and live up thereto, is not by the Declaration judged such *derogation*; because we are allowed Nonconformity, while we are forbid to *derogate from, &c.*

4. By our Licences *we are continually lyable (when Meeting-Places and Preachers are in the King's Books) to Mults, Fines, or such Acts of Violence, as from time to time they may be disposed to.*

A rare Invention to overthrow our Indulgence: His Majesty refuseth, nay forbiddeth the payment of a penny to his Servants imployed about the Licences; yet will demand Money himself of those that enjoy the privilege of them. We cannot believe that a vouchsafement so Royal doth proceed from a sordid Principle. However our many Sufferings with other Disadvantages, have reduced us to such an ebb of Coyn, as will abundantly secure the generality of us from this fear. If the Querist's Purse be in danger, and have occasion'd this Scruple, he is (for all a no Licence) more concern'd than most of us.

Query 5. *Whether our Liberties Civil as Christian, are not hereby given up and betrayed?*

Reply. This Query is already answered, as to its substance, in the third *Postulatum*. Yet it is beside the business. The real state of our Controversie is: *Whether I may sincerely accept a Licence? Not whether the Declaration incroach upon our Civil Rights?* Nay, Sir, let me set the Scruple a little straiter yet. What think you, If my Christian Liberty interfere with my enjoyment of Civil Rights, whether am I to hazzard that or this? I think the Rule is clear, we are to *leave Father and Mother, House and Land, &c.* and cleave to Christ. How many have forsaken their Inheritances to seek Gospel-Liberty? But the Querist will have us to let go our Christian Liberty, to preserve civil right.

But

But supposing we refuse Licences, will that secure our Civil Rights? Nothing less! The Law hath taken them all from us. Fines, Imprisonments, Seizures, Banishment, Outlawry, yea Death it self is our hire by Law. Indulgence defendeth us from these Laws, and thereby continueth our National Priviledges, so far is it from taking them away.

Only one Consideration is subjoyned to abett the Affirmative of this Query, viz. *By accepting a Licence, we give the King an Arbitrary Power, we acknowledge he may dispence with Old Laws, and make New. For by the same rule that he may make a New Law for my pretended good and advantage, he may make another for my real hurt.*

Strangel! Did the *French* and *Belgick* Churches make his Majesties Predecessor Arbitrary, by accepting an Indulgence of the free exercise of their manner of Worship? Yet the Laws were thereby, *ipso facto*, suspended; I mean so many of them as respected that Case. Do we make his Majesty Arbitrary, by accepting his free offer to suspend the Execution of Ecclesiastical Laws, which Himself declareth inherent in himself, and Parliaments have Recognized to belong to his Throne?

Sir, My work lies in other Studies. Niceness about Laws belongs not to me, nor private Christians, where a *Salvo* of God's Authority is preserved. But in this case we have a sure determination, if a King's Declaration, and the Parliaments Record be of weight; which for my own part I prefer above your private judgment. I am sorry, Sir, that unintelligible Expression is again repeated, That the King in this Indulgence *makes a new Law*. You have a peculiar fancy that a *Declaration* is a *Law*. But whoever imagined it, save your self? Or, where is there an Author to be found affirming, *That because his Majesty puts out a Declaration, therefore he can make Law, or by the same rule?* I pray satisfie me herein, before you expect my consent, That accepting a Licence abetteth *Arbitrariness*.

The Querist hath finished his main Interrogatories, and addresseth himself to answer three doughty Objections against his own Judgment.

Object. *Liberty of Preaching the Gospel is a most desirable thing, and to be acknowledged with thankfulness.*

Ans. His Reply is, *But as for this Liberty in Masquerade, or this Restraint rather unmask'd, there seems to be as little reason with thankfulness to own it, as upon the terms tendered to receive it.* Let the Readers judge, whether the Reply be either intelligible, or satisfactory. I blush to review it,

Obj. *Are not the Persecuting Bishops made toothless, and the Oppressing Courts put down? Is not this a Mercy thankfully to be acknowledged.*

Ans^r. The Querist replyeth, *Yes sure as coming from God; but not as from them, in a design to make way for the Inquisition, or some other mischief, there will be little cause to bless them for it. It will be time enough to praise the fair day at night.*

Habemus fatentem reum. Our Querist instead of answering the Objection, yieldeth our whole cause. First, he telleth us, *We ought to bless God for this Indulgence.* What? may we bless him for it, and not accept it? Secondly, he alloweth us *to make our acknowledgements to the Instruments used by God in the matter, supposing there be no design upon us.* And Thirdly, the whole difficulty about our Licences being suspended upon the suspicion of a design; their lawfulness is thereby granted, only expedience is questioned.

There followeth a long Paragraph, out of which, all I can gather material is, *Supposing the late Coercion had taken place to cut us short, ought we to receive Liberty from them that did it, to Preach the Gospel upon any terms? No, by no means! for they Preach'd the Gospel louder in Prison, and at the Stake, than they that accept Liberty.*

How Orthodox this Doctrine is, I hope, Sir, you will discover upon a review of it. *Because our Liberty of Preaching is for a time violently taken from us, we may suddenly refuse the freedom thereof when offered.* What had become of Religion long before this day, if the Apostles and Primitive Ministers had been of your mind, is easie to conclude. But they were strangers to such a Spirit. They accepted Deliverance out of their Prisons, when they might have it; and returned to their Work with joy. So must we.

The Martyrs, I confess, gave in a great Testimony to the Gospel by their Suffering. But that their Testimony would have been clear, or accepted with God, supposing they had refused a proffer'd Indulgence; is marvellous questionable. Nor was their Suffering properly *Preaching the Gospel.* That Text, *Heb. 11. 35.* is miserably abused. The Querist tells us, *They did not accept Deliverance upon mean, low, unworthy terms:* insinuating that it was generosity and noble Conditions which they stood upon; whereas if you read *Maccab. 7. 1.* &c. you shall find no terms were offered but wicked, such as by the positive Command of God, no Jew might accept. Neither will this fancy (if granted) serve the Querist's turn. For we are to far from being limited to wicked sinful terms, or low and unworthy; that our Indulgence is perfectly free without any Condition at all.

Obj.

Obj. The Querist again Objecteth, *That the refusers of Licences, are more nice than wise, stumble at straws, and make Mountains of Mole-hills. If a Thief should rob us, may we not receive part of our Money again ?*

Ans. This light Objection puzzleth the Querist, yet he adventureth, very unhappily, to obviate it, in both its branches. First, he saith, *A Licence appeareth a little thing to a Superficial view ; but yet if we look into it, we find it no small matter. For a glance with the Eye is but in appearance a small thing, yet the Heart accompanying, it contracteth great evil. A touch with the Hand is but a small business, yet it defileth greatly, &c. A little Leaven leaveneth a great lump. It was a little Unbelief of the Heads of the Tribes of Israel, that kept them out of Canaan, &c.* I cannot but observe the ingenuity of the Querist, in this place only, visible. Finding the two first Objections too hard for his Logick, they are kindly yielded. But he is resolved others shall not serve him so. This therefore is fix'd on, either invented by himself, and consequently gently tempered (for 'tis unfit he should raise a Spirit more subtle than himself) or taken from the mouth of some young Sophister, who was afraid to press too hard upon his Adversary, lest he should be retaliated.

The Objector seems to confess Licences sinful, only they are but *Peccadillo's, but Straws and Mole-hills in comparison, and consequently dispensable.* For, all the Instances given, are of things evil in their own nature : only in appearance lighter than in deed.

This advantage makes the Querist bestir himself briskly. But, poor man, he loseth his ground for want of skill to manage it.

First, instead of arguing from the nature of sin to our obligation to avoid it, he pleadeth from the effect. A *sinful glance* is not impleaded because sinful, but because it *makes way for great guilt.* A little Leaven is not by the Querist's reasoning unlawful for its intrinsicall sowreness ; but its diffusion through the whole lump. It seems he had not compared *Math.* 13. 33. with *1 Cor.* 5. 6. The Leaven of the Gospel being good, is commended from its spreading prevalency. The Leaven of Sin discommended from the like diffusiveness, not as diffusive solely, but sinful in it self, and yet infectious. So that by our Querist's reason, a Licence were lawful, supposing it a little sinful, were there not danger of its spreading, and becoming universal. Whereas indeed this cause is granted in the Objection, but he is too civil to accept it. For if sinful at all, the Argument is stronger from that innate iniquity to its unlawfulness, than from any probable effects, how great soever, likely to flow thence.

Again, as a further illustration, the *little Unbelief of the Heads of the Tribes* is mentioned. I am sorry the Querist will expose his unacquaintance with Scripture so grossly, I suppose he is better vers'd in the other end of the Bible. Pray, Sir, why do you call it a *little Unbelief*? And why was it a *little Unbelief of the Heads of the Tribes*? As if the sin were small in it self, and the *Heads of the Tribes* only guilty, not the People. For your satisfaction, read *Numb. 14. 1, 2. All the Children of Israel murmured, &c.* And compare that Scripture with *Heb. 3. 17, 18. 1 Cor. 10. 10, 11.* and you will find it a signal instance of Unbelief. Nor do I find in all the Scripture, any excuse or alleviating expression concerning it. I think the signal punishment of that sin, and its singling out as *the* instance of Unbelief in those dayes, argue it a great sin.

Yet, Sir, I utterly deny taking a Licence to be a sin at all, and I believe the innocence thereof proved in this discourse, which at one blow avengeth you of this untoward Objection, and cutteth off your answer with it.

But as to the second part of the Objection. You say, *The case of the Thief is not the Case in hand.* True, as for other reasons, so because the resemblance is not the thing. Yet for any thing discoverable in your answer, it may be the case, or somewhat neer it. You tell us, *That a constraint'd act performed when we were under the Thief's power, is judg'd null by the Law.* What if it be? Is it therefore unlawful? A promise made to a Thief when we are at his mercy, is not obligatory. But the Law no where saith, we may not receive all or part of our Goods from him, or make a promise in our danger, or perform it afterward if we please. But, Sir, it is an odious comparison, which, because I have a tenderness for you, I dismiss; without taking notice of the bad things in the rest of your Answer.

There followeth four Queries more, without any additional either explication or confirmation considerable: which bring up the Reer, and close the Querist's Paper.

Query 1. *Whether if this be so, that this indeed upon good grounds appears to be a stratagem to introduce Popery, and tends to defile and insnare so much, to contract guilt and sin, and betrays and destroys rather than enlargeth our Christian or Civil Liberty; whether for any to rejoyce in such a thing of nought, to run greedily to them for a supposed favour, which is the quite contrary; they may not when it is to late, sadly find with the silly Fish they have catch'd the deadly Hook instead of the goodly Bait, and justly come under the rebuke of the following Scriptures, Prov. 14. 15. Isa. 10. 20. Prov. 25. 26. Isa. 5. 13, 14, 15. Heb. 11. 25. Hos. 13. 2.*

But

But, what if it be not so ? What if we have proved the *Queries*, as stated by the *Querist*, false and injurious, both to the Giver and Accceptors of the Indulgence ? Have the Licensed then cause to complain ? Or rather have not Professors just reason to accuse the *Querist* of an attempt to deceive ? What think you of *Prov. 14. 15.* alledged by your self ? Did you not expect *simple Souls would believe your insinuating delusive words* ? but, Sir, *the Prudent have look'd better to their goings.* Indeed all these Texts, as the *Querist* orders them, are wickedly abused ; being wrested to countenance his idle *Queries*, and the rest of that Confusion, which thereby, and otherwise, he would impose upon credulous Souls.

What can he find in *Isa. 10. 20* ? Because the *Jews* might no more lean upon *Egypt* and *Syria*, rejecting relyance upon God ; therefore we may not take *Licences*. Is this a leaning upon them that smote us with a neglect of Faith in God ? May we not lean upon God, and make use of the Liberty which he sendeth us by Men ?

Is our *Licensing* a *falling down before the wicked* ? as you seem to persuade from *Prov. 25. 26.* Bring forth your strong reasons, and first prove the Charge : then be peremptory. As impertinent is *Isa. 51. 12, 13, &c.* How do you know we act from *fear of Men that die* ? What have we done that argues fear ? His Majesty put on no terrible appearance in the Declaration. Nay, he laid down Severity, and spread abroad his Arms to imbrace His poor (till then) discouraged Subjects. And must we be afraid of Favour ? Besides, The Declaration came out in a season of respite, at least here in the City, insomuch that there was nothing visible likely to affright us ; yet you conclude, we must act in fear.

Well ! Because I will not be so cross, as the *Querist*, to contradict all things ; be it so ! we were afraid ; but it was of sin, lest we should by refusing *Licences*, bid defiance to Providence, like the *Querist*, and scorn the Mercy offered. We were afraid, of outstanding the opportunity of the day, to work in it while we might, without disturbance.

Nor is our *Licence* saying a *Confederacy*, with I know not whom, to which end you abuse *Isa. 8. 12.* Are there any Articles drawn up between us and any wicked sort of men, to carry on a joynt sinful design together ? We do indeed resolve to live peaceably and innocently in our places. But this we did before, and it was our Principle from the beginning. I fear, Sir, you understand not the meaning of that Scripture, it may be 'tis too plain for a mystical Head ; review it, I pray, and let me know your mind hereafter.

Heb. 11. 25. is nextly forced upon the stage. And it tells us, *Moses chose rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures*

Pleasures of Sin for a season. Prove our Liberty sinful, and the pleasure or respite of it wicked, and we'll give back our Licences. If *Moses* could, without disobeying the positive Command of God, have continued in *Egypt*, or enjoyed the pleasures of it innocently, it had been his duty to stay there; at least matter of Liberty to stay or go, which he pleased.

Shew us any Rule for refusing the Indulgence, (for we know none) and we are ready to take our Lot with the Querist. Otherwise, we dare not suffer like Fools, when we may be free sinlessly.

I beseech you, Sir, why was not *Gen. 1. 1.* put instead of *Hos. 13. 2.* likely your nimble Invention might have forg'd a better Plea thence. Pray what *Calves do we kiss*? What Idols do we worship in taking a Licence? Speak with understanding! I cannot conceive what colour of advantage you have against us by this Scripture. Sir, it were very just to retort these Scriptures upon your self, and as easie as just; but I abhor the imitation of your loose discourse.

I do not now wonder at the boldness of Papists pretending to fetch the reason of Worship of Angels, Justification by Works, Purgatory, Penance, the Pope's Vicgerency, Supremacy, Infallibility, &c. from Scripture. Seeing the Querist (I hope he is a Protestant for his own sake) argues thence for his fancy's with equal impertinence. It this be reasoning, there is nothing necessary to the Faculty but Ignorance and Confidence.

Query 2. 'Tis again questioned, *whether it is not much more mean and unworthy, for the anointed Kings and Priests of God to debasethem-selves, to ask leave of the Bottomless Pit-Bishops to perform their Office; than for a King to ask leave of a Cobler to execute his Function? And whether it is not as bad to go to the Beast, as to the Whore, for Approbation and Allowance to serve the Lamb?*

Reply. *Should thy Lyes make men hold their peace, and when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?* Let the Spiritual or Carnal Reader (I care not which) be Umpire, the indifferent or prejudiced discern. Have we asked leave of the Bishops to Preach? With what Conscience is this all eadg'd? And, whom do you make the Beast? I dare not dissent upon the expression for your sake, Sir.

—— *Pudet hac opprobria nobis,*

Kil dici potuisse. ———

Query 3. You proceed. *Whether such wantonness, and unbelief, are not the sad fruits of former Apostacy's from the Work and Cause of God, and sad Omens of further and sharper Tryals at the door?*

Reply. Taking a Licence was from fear before, now from wantonness.

Can the same action be the result of both these at once? 'Tis impossible! Pray, Sir, though you be resolved to contradict us, be a little more consistent with your self.

It seems by this Query we were Apostates before this late day: and we must believe it, or uncivilly put the Querist to an unlikely proof. In the interim, I cannot but observe the charity of the man, who spareth none of these sweet, obliging kind terms, lest we should complain of hard usage. I can scarce forbear to gather a List of all the Christian Titles wherewith he treats us in his Paper, that the Reader at once may view and admire the gentle air which our Author breathes: but too much of that already. Only take notice what kind of Apostates we are, *Not from the Truth or Worship of the Gospel*; but the *Work and Cause of God*. Words of great significancy, which I am loth to unriddle.

Query 4. Lastly, Whether many, as a scourge for former Apostacies from the Work and Cause of God, for which they have evidenced under all the rebukes no repentance, are not left in judgment so to defile themselves? And whether they will not discover it by testifying the like Spirit of enmity and opposition against any that discover their sin in faithfulness, and press them to their duty in the paths of difficulty? As they did, Jer. 42. 43. Woulst others that are through temptation hurried into the snare, will bless the Lord for such faithfulness, and improve it to no other end, but to make haste out of the snare, and deliver themselves.

Reply. *With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of mans day.* I appeal from the Querist, to him who judgeth righteously, whether we be Apostates, or not. That we shall persecute him he need not fear: but what quarter we are like to find, if his power were answerable to all things else; that Spirit which breathes in every page of these Queries (and something which I care not to mention) gives me cause to suspect.

This is all which I think fit to Reply to that Pamphlet. Silence had been the most proper Confutation; but how I had then discharged my duty (for I was variously inforced to this unpleasing Work) was questionable. I have endeavoured what meekness the matter (all circumstances considered) was capable of, not rendring railing for railing. And now 'tis submitted to thy Christian censure and service (candid Reader.) There is an endeavour herein to vindicate the Innocent from a cruel unrighteous clamour and accusation: with a design also to obviate the deception of the weak. I leave thee to judge whether any thing be said sufficiently; and desire thy correction of what is amiss.

Farewel.

FINIS.